

190 SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER

so-called Parisian world of pleasure in Imperial times. Of course the book was denounced as immoral. The Parisian smart set shrieked loudly; many a Boulevardian journalist, whose looseness of life was notorious, perorated in club and cafe* respecting the amazing depravity of that man Zola; and in addition to abusive newspaper articles, there again came scurrilous pamphlets and parodies after the fashion of those which had followed "L'Assommoir."

Zola did not reply immediately; but in 1881, when "Nana" had been dramatised, he contributed a few articles to "Le Figaro" on the subject, besides penning a longer paper on "Immorality in Literature/" in which he contended that writers of the Idealist school made vice all roses and rapture, whereas the Naturalists made it repulsive. And he was absolutely convinced, he said, that far more heads had been turned, more young men and girls and women led into dangerous courses, by the works of George Sand, Octave Feuillet, Barbey d'AureVilly, and even Sir "Walter Scott, than by the writings of Flaubert, Balzac, Goncourt, and their followers. As for "Nana," said he, it had given offence because it was a true picture, and therefore spoilt the pleasure of the *viveurs* of Paris, who wished to see everything *couleur*

de rose beneath a cloud of *poudre-de-riz*.¹

In 1880, after the publication of "Nana," Zola wrote several short stories. He had published one, "Nai's Micoulin," in a paper called "La Re"forme," towards the close of the previous year; and he now gave "La Fete a Coqueville," "L'Inondation," and "Nantas," to "Le Voltaire," to which journal -he also contributed some papers on The'ophile Gautier, Ste.-Beuve, and others. But a better known publica-

¹ "Documents Litteraires," p. 375 *et seq.*